



o n e n e s s



YEARLY AFFIRMATIONS

By Dharma Dan



Ever since humans adopted their current calendar, they have marked the beginning of a new year with all kinds of rituals. The month of January is named after the Roman god Janus, whose two faces look in opposite directions, representing the past and future. Thus, the end of one year is, at the same time, the beginning of the next year. This is an opportunity to reflect on the past, as well as to plan for the future.

It always makes me chuckle when people make their usual goal-oriented resolutions which they know they will not be able to keep. This kind of ritual is definitely unrealistic and probably masochistic to boot. Here are some new ideas that may be more helpful:

1. Word of the Year. Choosing a word can set the tone for 2017. Choose a word that can encourage and accompany you on your spiritual journey. Consider your word like a chapter heading for the book that is your life. Print the word out and place it in parts of your house where you will see it every day. Spend some time to print out your word; that is, don't just scribble it with a Sharpie pen. After all, the care you take in printing your word,

reflects your seriousness about this project.

2. Seasonal walks. Mark your calendar to remind you to take four seasonal walks. Plan a convenient time to take a short mindful walk around your house or block on the dates of Spring Equinox, Summer Solstice, Autumn Equinox, and Winter Solstice. Focus on your senses and enjoy being alive. Even the word "seasons" is a reminder of the constant passing of time and a reminder to appreciate the preciousness of life.

3. Start a "More & Less" journal. Put at the top of page, "In 2017 I will do..." Then draw a vertical line dividing the sheet in half. Title the left-hand column, "MORE of this" and use "LESS of this" for the right-hand column. If you make it a ritual to do this on every January first, and save each yearly page in a journal, you will have a handy reference to see how your entries change from year to year.

Phrase your entries in question form, rather than as a statement. For example, "Will I smile more this year?" instead of "I will smile more this year." Studies show that when people phrase goals as questions, they're more likely to follow through.

Well, this is Dharma Dan signing off. I wish you a year full of supreme joy and supreme sadness. In human life, instances of both joy and sadness are inevitable and although we always want more joy than sadness, the most important aspect beyond the joy or sadness is the SUPREMENESS; that is, live each moment sincerely and completely.

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2017



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SUPER MOON

By Rev. Koyo Kubose

It was recently reported in the news that on November 14th the moon's orbit would be closest to the earth's orbit since 1948. This super moon was viewed by many people. This news item triggered a childhood memory of mine.

When I was seven years old, my family drove from Chicago to California to visit relatives. It was the summer of 1949. We took Highway 66, the southern route. We went leisurely, visiting places along the way, including a stop at Poston, Arizona where our family had stayed in an internment camp during WWII.

After arriving in California we stayed at my grandparents' farm. One night I looked up at the moon and exclaimed, "Hey, you have a moon here too!" My Auntie Alyce tried to explain that it was the same moon as viewed in Chicago but I was confused. After having just spent days driving across the country to get to California, how could it be the same moon?

The question I now pose is, "What to do when external facts collide with one's expectations?" The 2016 presidential election outcome provides a relevant context in which to ponder the

question within your own personal context and come up with a good teaching. Wouldn't taking the time to deal with such a conundrum be a valuable lesson in living life? I posed this challenging opportunity to our Bright Dawn Sangha and received several replies which are included in this Oneness issue.



SUPER MOON RESPONSE

By Michael Manyo

In regards to handling issues when my subjective experience and expectations do not smoothly integrate with external facts is very relevant to my life and most likely to many others. I would like to take the second part of the question first and it may answer the first part.

I first pick one single word out of the question, which is, "expectations". I often maintain unrealistic expectations in my view. This is not fortunate due to the fact that my expectations will not come to fruition or fall short. Not getting what I expected or what I wanted causes me to suffer and often leads to my own wrong thinking or wrong action as a result. The wrong thinking or wrong action leads to further suffering and negative karma. I suffer by my own hand. I summon

my own Maras. I continue in this samsara just carrying around a bag of bricks.

If I choose not to have unrealistic expectations, I experience more freedom, whatever the outcome is due to the fact that there is not one idea pitted against the other. I suppose that the quote "go with the flow" applies here. I may indeed care about the outcome but as I refuse the idea of an expectation leads me to no internal conflict and no angst. What I want is often not what I get, and if I could simply dissolve the same into emptiness I would be quicker to be working for the benefit of all beings as I would not be worrying so much about my ego or about me period.

The next word that stands out at the end of the question is the word "facts". What is fact? Do we really know or are our thoughts simply

how we perceive things. Inherent Existence might be a good example of an illusionary fact. As I sit in this chair typing on this laptop, I consider the chair. Did it just pop into existence? I don't think so, but we often take it for granted that the chair or the car or the house just "came to be". It did not. A variety of causes and conditions came together in order to make the chair as it is. This makes for an illusion that the chair came into this world as a chair and will remain a chair forever. Of course we also might know that the chair is not forever. It is forever changing, wearing, basically going away even if it last 100 years.

I recently retired from a 33 year job. In my early 20's I started. I clung to the fact that somehow that job would last forever and nothing

Super Moon Response continues on page 5

SpaceX: Presidential Election 2016

By William Toyo

On Nov. 9, we woke up feeling like strangers in a foreign land. For most of us, this outcome was a shock and very frightening. I was in complete denial. I thought about contacting SpaceX and see if it would be possible to be suspended in a capsule, and sent into space to orbit the earth for the next four years. In the end, the polls truly were off base: Donald Trump lost California by even more than expected. He's on tract to collect less than one-third of California's vote. All this is small solace, of course to the plurality of Americans who handed Democrat Hillary Clinton a popular-vote victory, now expected at two million votes, while watching Trump capture, the White House with a 306-232 Electoral Collage triumph. Nonetheless, the Golden State's over-whelming rejection of his hateful rhetoric sets the stage for a formidable political challenge to the president elect. One other thing we must realize is that more than 50 million people voted with the vision of equality, freedom of democracy and against fear and anger. Fast forwarding to present time: White Supremacist Stephen Bannon appointed to Chief White House Strategist, Middle of the night, angry Tweets, targeting protesters. Industry lobbyists set to "Regulate" the industries they made millions from. . It's clear that Trump is a grave threat to everything we stand for. He could unravel decades of hard-fought victories for people and the planet. We can't let Donald Trump think for one minute that we'll let him get away with destroying our freedom and environment. We must not let this country go backwards. I don't want to have to go back and march over the Edmund Pettus Bridge, as I did in Selma in 1965.

"We Shall Overcome" became a protest song for the Civil Rights movement. (Joan Baez, Pete Seeger).

We will put this administration in the shock and awe we all woke with the morning after the election. We will stand up for our civil rights, and will not let our planet to be destroyed by ignorance, greed and hatred.

This is not only to protect ourselves, but all people of this world. We can also have some peace of mind knowing the reality of impermanence, nothing lasts forever. Now a week later, after most the numbness has subsided, I have come to the realization, we do not need to get caught up in negative and aggressive thoughts. Instead of demonizing Trump voters as all bad people, it is imperative to find ways to work together for the betterment of everyone. We need to come together as a community (sangha) and look within our hearts and help anyway we can. We will survive Trump. Awareness is of the utmost importance. We must organize and find wisdom and compassion. We must also remember we are all born with Buddha Nature.

Does a Trump have Buddha Nature, Mu (a political koan).

We as a sangha must work together and we must learn from this experience. Now is the time more than ever to put into practice what Buddhism has always taught us, and follow the path. And that path at times calls for Engaged Buddhism. Each of us must step forward at every level within our power." We Shall Overcome". I could go on until the next full moon, so I will end in saying that we are all going to keep working for that vision of oneness.



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The purpose of the Bright Dawn Center is to offer a non-sectarian, non-dualistic approach, the Way of Oneness, to deepen individual spirituality in everyday life for people of all backgrounds

Super Moon: 2016 Election Results

By Alex Thompson

When I was a child, I had a strong fascination with astronomy. In fact, some of my earliest memories are of standing in my backyard with a flashlight in one hand and an encyclopedia in the other as I tried diligently to match the constellations in my book to what I was seeing in the sky. This hobby has stayed with me as I've become older. And now that I'm a man, I see the constellations less as patterns of flickering white light, and more as close friends who visit me from time to time.

For example, Orion comes every winter when the days are short and the nights are cold. His bow and arrow are always nocked and ready as he continues his eternal search for prey. When I'm feeling brave, I'll take a cup of tea out to the backyard, and chat with him for a bit. He likes to reminisce about my stint working on an organic farm when I would look up at him from the bunkhouse porch, and wonder aloud what tomorrow would bring. I'm also good friends with the vain queen Cassiopeia who hangs upside from her throne in the northern sky. Despite her precarious position, Cassiopeia has always been quite the talker. She enjoys chiding me about my many misadventures in college, and the nights I spent sleeping in the campus arboretum. I could go on, but suffice it to say that the stars are a great comfort to me. They remind me of pleasant memories from the past, guide me in my journey on dark nights, and act as a constant reminder that no matter how hectic things become here on Earth, there is a place above me that's peaceful and still.

However, there have been many times in my life where I couldn't see the stars. I live in the city, and there have been nights when the light pollution was so bad that I couldn't find my celestial friends. Other nights, worldly events have cluttered my mind to the point that I barely noticed the beauty of a clear night sky. It has been on those nights when circumstance has stopped me from seeing the stars that the moon has been my companion. In fact, I remember getting lost in the woods one evening when I tried to take a short cut back to camp. I couldn't see the stars because the trees were too thick, but the moon didn't leave me. She just shone as brightly as she could through the branches—lighting up the path so that I could find my way home.

After this year's presidential election, I started to

feel lost in much the same way that I felt that night in the woods. Primal fear and sadness bubbled in my stomach as the election results came in, and the feeling became more intense as time passed. I bore witness to the collective suffering of our nation as it flickered across my social media feeds, and I had no idea how I should respond. What is the skillful means that one uses to deal with so much pain? This question battered my brain for the better part of a week until the night of the super moon. It seemed like I hadn't looked up at the sky in decades, but I didn't want to miss a once in a lifetime event. So I dutifully brewed a cup of tea, walked out into my backyard, and looked up. The moon was bigger and brighter than I had ever seen it. The craters on her face were more pronounced, her glow was stronger than usual, and it almost felt like I could reach out and... Instinctively, I took several deep breaths and asked, "What should I do?"

"Just do what I did when you were lost." The moon replied, "Keep shining as brightly as you can." Immediately, a sense of calm came over me. My anxieties melted away as my mind grabbed onto the one thing in this crazy turn of events that I could control... my own behavior. I couldn't control the Electoral College. I couldn't explain why so many people voted the way that they did, or predict what would happen to our country in the next four years. But with the help of my spiritual practice, I could radiate light and compassion in the face of adversity. I could be a light unto the world, and do my part to help our country find its way home.



2016 Election Poem

by Ginny Parkum

*Karma bringing a most-unwanted acceptance speech
over the early-morning radio waves...yet in a civil tone
Rain dripping
Leaves falling
Earth drinking it all in
Life going on transforming
Imagine*

BOOKS BY BRIGHT DAWN CENTER LAY MINISTERS



DANDELIONS: Glimpses of Life by Michael G. Lawrence (Shinyo). Collection of short Dharma essays and simple practices for cultivating gratitude in everyday life. Some brief glimpses into the extraordinary that are part of our ordinary lives. 103 pages. \$7.50 plus shipping/handling.



GLIMPSES OF DHARMA: Teachings from Everyday Life by Sayo Shenpän. Collection of Dharma Talks and teachings from everyday life by the author. Sharing Dharma in a manner everyone can relate to, awakening the reader to a life filled with everyday spiritual teachings. 97 pages. \$5.00, plus shipping/handling.



WISDOM - COMPASSION - SERENITY: First Steps on the Buddhist Path by M. Sekiyo Sullivan. Helps us understand concepts like the Noble Eightfold Path, the Four Seals of the Dharma, and gives commonsense guidance on how to put these teachings into practice in everyday life. 83 pages. \$10.00 plus shipping/handling.

(To order see booklist on page 7)



NEW BOOK

"Bright Dawn Dharma Glimpses: A Collection of Teachings from Everyday Life" has been added to our book list.

Super Moon Response continues from page 2

would change. Wrong. I had a full head of hair and it was jet black back then. Unrealistic expectations. I think that we need to carefully evaluate our expectations and realize that nothing in this realm is permanent. Not the chair, not me, not how I feel right now, not how I look, not anything. When we consider our experience I think it may be somewhat illusionary as well. It is based on the past. We may believe that we have things all figured out based on "past" experience. The past is long gone. Threads of memories of the past might be like an illusion.

So, I need to examine my own thoughts and situations. It will not always go well but I need to learn to "let go and just be". Smooth sailing I think is based on our own minds. We make choices. I think Lama Kathy is right when she teaches that we make up who we want to be every day, regardless of the situation. I hope that I can make up a good human being without clinging. I hope that I can find the Middle Way.



BE AN OPTIMISTIC REALIST

by Rev. Koyo Kubose

This past November I traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, to participate in a Celebration of Life service of the late John Merrick. The Merrick clan, consisting of John, wife Carol, and six children lived in Kenosha, Wisconsin for many years, where Dr. John had established an animal vet hospital clinic.

Beginning in the 60's, the Merrick's explored different religions, attending services at various local churches. While attending a Unitarian service in Racine, Wisconsin, they heard a sermon by my father, Rev. Gyomay Kubose, who was the guest speaker that Sunday. This began a family friendship between the Merrick and Kubose families.

With Kenosha being only a little over an hour's drive from Chicago, the Merrick's began attending my father's Buddhist Temple of Chicago. Between my father and myself, we officiated weddings and funerals for the family members. When my father passed away in 2000, the Kubose family put together a "Remembering Sensei" book. This book included essays submitted in memory of Rev. Gyomay Kubose. John had submitted one of these essays which I read at John's service this past November in Atlanta, where he had retired to, since several of his children lived in that area. Here is the essay:

During the late 60's Carol and I began attending various churches so our children could experience different religions. In this manner, we met Rev. Kubose at the Unitarian Church of Racine, Wisconsin, a few miles north of Kenosha.

Visiting with Sensei and Minnie Kubose after a Sunday service at the temple, we mentioned a recent visit to the House on the Rock and Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin East Studio near Spring Green, Wisconsin. Rev. Kubose said he would really like to see those places. We made plans to travel there in the near future.

In early September, the Kubose's drove to Kenosha and we proceeded to Spring Green, 30 miles west of Madison. Lunch at the Spring Green Restaurant, a Frank Lloyd Wright designed building built into the bluff overlooking the Wisconsin River was a pleasant respite. Next, a two hour tour of 'House on the Rock' was

Optimistic Realist continues on page 6

punctuated by many “Ooo’s and Ahh’s as each new spectacular room or vista was revealed. The place was relatively primitive compared to its current commercial atmosphere.

Pulling into the Taliesin parking lot, we encountered a yellow barricade with a “Closed for the Season” sign attached. Rev. Kubose said, “Pull around, I see a truck up ahead. I will talk to them” In his most broken Japanese-English accent, Rev. Kubose explained to the workers that he had previously met Frank Lloyd Wright and was most sorry he would not be able to see the facility. Without any hesitation, one of the men said, “Wait here, I’ll be right back.” Soon he returned with a young Oriental fellow who spoke to Rev. Kubose in Japanese. Rev. Kubose apologized for pretending to be more “foreign” than he really was, explaining that we had driven from Chicago and were sorry to have bothered him if he was busy. He and Rev. Kubose shared a good laugh. The young man explained he was a student recently arrived from Japan to study with the Wright group. He had been one of those left behind to gather up everything for the trip to their winter quarters in Arizona.

Needless to say, we were given the grand tour of the facility. I believe the student eventually settled in Chicago, but I’ve forgotten his name.

The day is as fresh in my mind as yesterday. Rev. Kubose making the best of any situation. Always looking for the sunshine, expecting everything to work out, but accepting whatever happens.

John Merrick
(Kenosha , Wisconsin)

When I do a service for anyone who has passed away, I have a personal thing I do in honor of the deceased. I like to formulate a life teaching based on the deceased’s life and have that as my own association or as sort of gift from the deceased to me in the form of a life teaching. I consider what John expressed at the end of his essay, as a really nice life teaching. I can also attest to the accuracy of John’s observation since I have witnessed my father in many different kinds of life situations. My father was an optimist and always approached situations with a positive attitude. However, he was also realistic enough to deal in the best possible way no matter how a situation turned out. John was astute enough to recognize this aspect of how my father approached life. John’s expression of this life-wisdom was a gift to me that I will take to heart.



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Book by Rev. Koyo Kubose

BRIGHT DAWN: Discovering Your Everyday Spirituality.
Describes the author's daily morning ritual and how ordinary things and activities can deepen one's spirituality. 152 pages.

Books by Rev. Gyomay Kubose

EVERYDAY SUCHNESS. A classic collection of short articles first published in 1967, hailed as one of the most significant books in Buddhism because of its simple explanations and reference to everyday life. 142 pages.

THE CENTER WITHIN. Continues the approach of "Everyday Suchness." Collection of 58 essays of down-to-earth teachings for a richer, more meaningful life. 134 pages.

AMERICAN BUDDHISM. Covers a brief history of Buddhism in America, problems in terminology and misunderstandings common to Westerners. 29 pages.

ZEN KOANS. Commentary on over 200 classical and modern koans. Insights and life teachings applicable to all Buddhists. 274 pages.

Translations by Rev. Gyomay Kubose

THE FUNDAMENTAL SPIRIT OF BUDDHISM by Haya Akegarasu (Rev. Gyomay Kubose's teacher). Translated by Rev. Kubose. 99 pages.

TAN BUTSU GE. (Translation and commentary). This sutra tells the story of Dharmakara who became Amitabha, the Buddha of Infinite Life and Light. 56 pages.

HEART OF THE GREAT WISDOM SUTRA. (Translation and commentary). This sutra deals with the teachings of non-self and nothingness. 35 pages.

Other Recommended Books

BUDDHIST SYMBOLS. Handy brochure explaining common Buddhist symbols. Quad-fold.

BUDDHISM: Path of Enlightenment. Simple, concise introduction to basic Buddhism. Teachings are superimposed on beautiful full-color photographs of nature scenes such as water ponds, rock gardens, a bamboo grove, etc. 20 pages.

COFFINMAN by Shinmon Aoki. This diary of a mortician invites the reader into the fascinating world of Buddhist spirituality which sees the extraordinary in things ordinary, mundane, and even repugnant. 142 pages.

DISCOVERING BUDDHISM IN EVERYDAY LIFE by Marvin Harada 2011. In commemoration of his 25 years of ministry at the Orange County Buddhist Church, over 40 essays by Rev. Harada were selected from past monthly newsletters. 128 pages.

RIVER OF FIRE, RIVER OF WATER by Taitetsu Unno. Introduces the Pure Land tradition of Shin Buddhism using personal anecdotes, stories, and poetry. With spiritual insight and unparalleled scholarship, this book is an important step forward for Buddhism in America. 244 pages.

THE ART OF TAKING ACTION by Gregg Krech. Draws on Eastern philosophy, Buddhism, Japanese psychology, Zen, and martial arts to offer an approach to ACTION that goes beyond productivity and time management. 216 pages.

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DEC	Theme: Thankfulness Purpose: Deepen the Scope of Gratitude Method: End-of-the-Year Gassho:” Stand with your arms by your sides, eyes closed. Slowly on the inhale, raise arms out to each side until shoulder high. Pause with a long exhale. Slowly inhale while bringing arms forward and inward into a traditional Gassho position; while doing this “gathering-in” movement, welcome all that you experienced during the past year... the good, bad, whatever. Then exhale while bowing head in respect to all that happened.
JAN	Theme: New Possibilities Purpose: Cultivate a Creative Attitude Method: Make up your own unique Gassho gesture. For example, here’s my Double-Okay Gassho: Make “okay” sign with each hand and bring together in front of eyes. Look through each circle formed by index finger and thumb; use this “binocular” to see the Okayness of all things, come what may.
FEB	Theme: Projecting Love Purpose: Sharpen focus and attention Method: Form a heart using both hands, with thumbs forming bottom point of heart shape and tips of fingers touching and pointing down. Place this mudra (hand gesture) over your heart and push mudra forward to represent projection of love outwards. Use this “Heart-Gassho:” whenever needed to counter apathy or inappropriate emotions.

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